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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7227

INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHXA/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 000768

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/RUS, FOR EEB/ESC/IEC GALLOGLY AND WRIGHT

EUR/CARC, SCA (GALLAGHER, SUMAR)

DOE FOR HARBERT, HEBORG, EKIMOFF

DOC FOR 4231/IEP/EUR/JBROUGH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2018

TAGS: EPET ENRG ECON PREL RS

SUBJECT: BP AND TNK-BP OFFICES RAIDED BY AUTHORITIES

Classified By: DCM Daniel A. Russell for Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶11. (C) Russian authorities raided the offices of TNK-BP on the morning of March 19 and, later that day, the offices of BP Russia. TNK-BP VP for International Affairs, Amcit Shawn McCormick, told us late that night that the raid had been conducted by the FSB. McCormick and a contact at BP said the FSB agents pored over documents and seized computers, effectively shutting both offices down. The FSB agents were in the offices until 3 a.m.

¶12. (C) McCormick told us the raid was related to the FSB's investigation of a TNK-BP employee, Ilya Zaslavsky and his brother Alexander, who is affiliated with the British Council. According to McCormick, the brothers are under suspicion of trying to obtain confidential Gazprom information. He also indicated that the Zaslavskys may be dual American-Russian citizens. They have reportedly been detained, released, and signed documents agreeing not to leave the country while the investigation is on-going.

¶13. (U) The FSB issued a press release March 20, which acknowledged its role in the investigation and identified the detainees as the Zaslavsky brothers whom it accused of attempting to gather "confidential commercial information" in the oil and gas sector. The FSB claimed to have found "hard evidence" implicating the brothers and linking them to foreign intelligence agencies (including the CIA).

¶14. (C) BP and TNK-BP have not publicly commented on the case except to say that they are "cooperating with the authorities." TNK-BP President Robert Dudley told us March 20 that the company was operating normally, had "nothing to hide," that press reports were sensationalizing the situation, and that the company was planning to issue a statement later that day reaffirming their intent to cooperate with the Russian authorities.

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Comment  
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¶15. (C) There have been numerous press reports speculating as to the motives behind the GOR's investigation but at this point we have no firm information. We have been closely coordinating on this case with the British Embassy, which, of course, is concerned about the implications for its overall bilateral relationship. We have confirmed that Alexander and

Ilya Zaslavsky are U.S. citizens.  
RUSSELL